

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-6 and 8-18 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Entry of Amendment

The present Amendment is being submitted with a Request for Continued Examination. Entry of this Amendment and reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Telephone Interview

Applicants note with appreciation the telephone interview conducted with Examiner Liu on August 4, 2004. At that interview, possible changes to the claims were discussed in regard to the art rejections. No agreement was reached as to the allowability of the claims. However, the present amendment includes changes that were discussed during that interview.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. The Examiner states that antecedent basis is not present in claim 8, line 4 for "the second depress spots".

Applicants disagree with the Examiner, and point out that this limitation is present in the first line of the next to last paragraph of claim 1.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102**

Claims 1, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Sato et al. (U.S. Patent 6,344,618). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner points out that the Sato et al. reference teaches a directional switch with a base block having a housing section with a plurality of contact terminals in various directions. An elastic member is located above the common contact terminal and a depressing block is located above the conductive member with an axle rod passing through the depressing block. Applicants submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by this reference.

As pointed out in the telephone interview discussed above, the Sato et al. reference does not include the lining pad used in the present invention to prevent the depressing block from directly contacting the conductive member and to thereby reduce metal wear on the contact. (Page 3, lines 17-20 of the present specification). Claim 1 has now been amended to include this lining pad. The final paragraph has been added to claim this feature in means plus function language. Applicants submit that

Sato et al. does not include any structure corresponding to this element, and accordingly claim 1 is allowable thereover.

Claims 2-4, 6 and 8-10 depend from claim 1 and as such are also considered to be allowable. Each of these claims also recites other features of the invention and are additionally allowable.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103**

Claims 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12 and 15-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being obvious over Sato et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 5 has now been rewritten in independent form. This claim includes the limitation as previously found in claim 1 and also includes a description of the lining pad. As indicated above, in regard to claim 1, Applicants submit that the Sato et al. reference does not show a similar feature, and Applicants submit that claim 5 is also allowable.

Claim 11 is an independent claim and likewise includes a description of the lining pad. Applicants submit that claim 11 is allowable for the same reasons recited above with regard to claims 1 and 5.

Claims 12 and 18 depend from claim 11, and as such are also considered to be allowable. These claims also recite other features, which make these claims additionally allowable.

Claims 3, 4, 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being obvious over Sato et al. and further in view of Yamasaki et al. (U.S. Patent 6,344,619). The Examiner cites Yamasaki to show a base block and lid with latch elements. However, even if this reference does show these features, Applicants submit that these claims are still allowable based on their dependency from allowable claims 1 and 11.

#### Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patent relied on by the Examiner. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

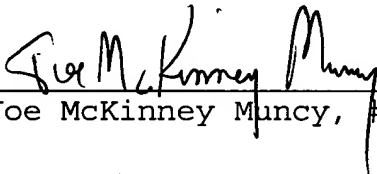
In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Appl. No. 09/993,567


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By   
Joe McKinney Muncy, #32,334

P.O. Box 747  
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000

 KM/RFG:kss  
2450-0469P